



Riva Tabelisma, Provisional Elder

Attended seminary at: United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities (St. Paul, MN)

Interests: Learning and making new things (baking, playing the ukulele, art projects) and finding theological reflections in pop culture (music, movies, sitcoms)

My call to ministry story: I knew I was called to ministry when I was a high school sophomore, but I tried to “escape” it for 25 years. My call to ministry story is almost the same as the story of Jonah, until the part about being swallowed by the big fish and eventually “doing the ministry.”

A bit about my church and community: I serve Christ UMC in Maplewood. It is a small congregation close to the border of St. Paul. Despite the size of the congregation, it is thriving. Our ministries are an active part of the neighborhood. We are committed to being a safe space for folks holistically. I also started the Bayanihan Fellowship (Filipino church plant) to create a faith community for Filipinos and Filipino Americans living in Minnesota. We are building relationships with each other, sharing our stories with each other, and trying to relive the spirit of bayanihan (the Filipino term for “community building”).

What I appreciate about being part of the Minnesota Conference: Someone told me once, “It is hard to bring people to Minnesota (because of the weather), but it is harder for people to leave Minnesota.” I agree with this sentiment. When I became part of the Minnesota Conference, I felt supported in many aspects of ministry. As a person of color, I appreciate how the conference is trying its best (even with limitations) to continue to make Minnesota a safe space for ministry.



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